



SAFETY ALERT

Vehicle and trailer safety

During a recent DRA activity, the driver experienced significant side-to-side sway in the trailer which resulted in a trailer becoming unhitched from the tow ball. This resulted in minor damage to the towing vehicle though fortunately the vehicle and trailer were safely stopped without further incident.

The primary cause of this incident has been assessed as inappropriate loading and balancing of the load in the trailer resulting in insufficient downward load on the towing hitch.

DRA has initiated a review of our vehicle loading and towing practices including identification of maximum load capacities on our fleet including our hired vehicles. DRA is receiving expert assistance from industry in this regard.

In the meantime, it is necessary to put in place some precautionary restrictions to ensure the safety of members and all other road users. With immediate effect the following interim measures are to apply:

- Vehicles laden with strike team or other equipment are not to have more than a driver and single passenger with personal baggage
- Vehicles towing trailers are not to be loaded with strike team or other equipment but may carry a maximum of 4 personnel and personal baggage
- When loading trailers, it is important that heavy loads are placed over the axle(s), and that weight is distributed evenly with a positive load (ideally around 10% of the load) bearing on the tow ball.
- Further advice on vehicle payloads will be forthcoming as soon as possible pending the development of an SOP. In the meantime, members are to adhere to these limits.
- Drivers and members loading vehicles need to be mindful of the maximum capacity of the trailer (also known as Gross Trailer Mass) which will be available on the compliance plate.
- National Logistics Manager is requested to coordinate with DRT managers to commence weighing significant items of equipment including trunks and visibly record weight on the exterior of the item.

These arrangements will remain in place until the completion of the review. It is acknowledged that this will mean that planners will need to factor in these restrictions.

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